



quality standards. 24 nations commit to phase out production of CFCs. Yucca Mountain, Nevada is selected as the disposal site
Surgeon General urge every homeowner to test for radon gas, a cause of lung cancer. 1989 Exxon Valdez spills nearly 11 million

LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

A Decent Home and Suitable Living Environment - A Congressional Mandate

Congress mandated “a decent home and suitable living environment for every American family” in 1949, and reaffirmed it in 1968. President John F. Kennedy warned in 1963 that if we neglect our cities, we will neglect the nation.

Yet since families began moving from the city into post-World War II houses in Levittowns, in New York and Pennsylvania, our nation’s cities have been under attack. Seeking the dream of home ownership, families moved to the suburbs. New roads and freeways provided easy automobile access to abundant and affordable land, encouraging new development and urban sprawl while threatening farm land and open space.

As masses left the inner city, the character of neighborhoods changed. Productive industrial factories and buildings became Superfund or brownfields sites. Vacant lots became garbage dumps. The tax base disappeared. Schools were neglected. America’s great cities were in peril.

Cities faced a myriad of environmental problems. Polluted air. Lead paint hazards. Asbestos. Radon. Vehicle gridlock. Hazardous waste sites. Aging and outdated infrastructures. All of this threatened the health of children. As urban

sprawl expanded, many of these same problems inevitably moved to the suburbs.

“We will help you build what we hear you are asking for and what is no less than you and your families deserve: livable communities, comfortable suburbs, vibrant cities, and, for your grandchildren’s well-being and for their grandchildren’s too, green spaces.”
— Vice President Al Gore, January 11, 1999

Working with its state partners and cities, EPA has made tremendous progress in cleaning the air, land and water in communities throughout our country. Since 1978, average blood-lead levels in children have declined by nearly 75 percent. Now, sellers and landlords must disclose known lead paint and its hazards to both renters and buyers. To increase citizens’ understanding, any contractor involved in remodeling or renovation is now required to give home owners a copy of a new booklet, *Protect Your Family From Lead in Your Home*.

Between 1985 and 1994, 90 of the nation’s largest cities — with the exception of Los Angeles — saw a 72 percent reduction in the number of days when the air was considered unhealthy. In the mid-Atlantic region, we went from 60 ozone

action days in 1988 to fewer than ten in 1998.

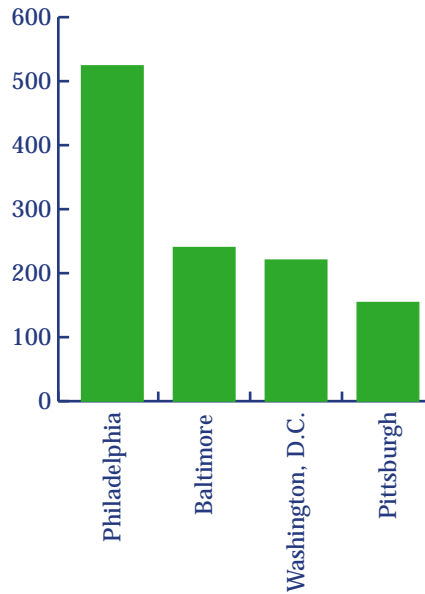
Making Communities Safer and Healthier

Housing and facility siting patterns to often have exposed low-income and minority communities to disproportionate exposure to environmental hazards, diminishing the quality of life.

The agency is aggressively addressing the issues of environmental justice. An innovative settlement of a lawsuit in Chester, Pennsylvania, for example has reduced lead paint hazards in a playground located in a minority neighborhood.

Through our Green Communities Program, we

Houses with Lead Cities in Region III



There are approximately 7.5 million houses in the region that have lead based paint. Children six years old and younger are most vulnerable to lead poisoning and there are more than 2 million living in the region, 16 percent of whose families live below the poverty level.

help local communities protect their environmental resources, as they develop community-based partnerships for sustainable development. An assistance kit is available at www.epa.gov/region3/greenkit which provides a step-by-step, framework for communities to take common-sense steps that will improve the environment and protect the health of their families.

Recycling Land and Buildings

EPA has eliminated environmental hazards in abandoned land and dilapidated buildings left behind by the old economy or urban sprawl and eliminated the environmental hazards to make the property developable and livable — generating new jobs, an increased tax base and a better partnership between public and private sectors. Grants to cities make the development possible. Thanks to a \$1.6 million grant, Baltimore has inventoried 1,000 acres of potential brownfields ranging in size from less than an acre to 60 acres.

A shining example of turning a former industrial site to a new use is the old Bethlehem Steel plant in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, a \$450 million multi-use development called Bethlehem Works, it has the potential to become the largest brownfields redevelopment project in the country. The



Above is an artist's rendering of an entrance to the Bethlehem Works with the blast furnaces in the background. The former brownfields project retains the existing historic industrial character of Bethlehem Steel Corporation's former plant by retention and adaptive reuse of existing buildings and the addition of new buildings designed in a compatible industrial style.

Courtesy of Bethlehem Works Project

chemicals are being released from specific industrial facilities. New York State declares parts of Love Canal area habitable and federal agency to promote, support, and encourage environmental education for people of all ages. Clean Air Act amended

mixed-use development is the result of EPA working with state agencies and Bethlehem Steel. It retains the existing historic industrial character of the former steel plant. When completed it will house the National Museum of Industrial History, an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, a hotel conference center, restaurants, stores, a movie theater complex, and an incubator for high-tech startup companies. An adjacent 1,600 acres of land is being developed as a commerce center with distribution, transportation, manufacturing and commercial facilities.

A state wildlife preserve and a large recreational area with sports fields and hiking trails will soon be on land that was once part of an industrial facility in Glasgow, Delaware. The site is being cleaned up by the previous owner. With EPA's assistance, it has been acquired by the State of Delaware and W.L. Gore, which will use 150 acres for a manufacturing complex. Three hundred acres of wetlands and woods will be preserved as public parks, preserving open space and natural habitat.

Teaching Children About the Environment

Through its environmental education office, each summer, the agency has been teaching students from inner-city

middle schools about the environment and training them to return to their neighborhoods and schools as mentors for others. In 6 years, the program has graduated 150 students who in turn have been instructors for more than 30,000 people. Many states now include education about the environment as a part of core curricula. Since 1991, EPA has funded many environmental education projects of states, cities, schools and non-profit organizations.

Better America Bonds

Recent national focus on livability contains several ambitious initiatives including \$10 billion "Better America Bonds" that cities can use to preserve green space, create or restore parks, protect water quality and clean up brownfields sites. EPA Administrator Carol M. Browner met with the National

Courtesy of S. C. Delaney/EPA



The majority of the region's children live in cities and surrounding urban areas. Children are particularly vulnerable to environmental health risks because they are still developing and least able to protect themselves from exposure.

Association of Home Builders to launch, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, an initiative to renovate or build 1 million new inner-city housing units in the next 10 years.

From a Good Idea to a Habitat

Families all across the region are developing good environmental habits. Parents car-pool children to school. A stop at the recycling center is often on the Saturday to-do list. More and more native plants are thriving in community and backyard gardens. Efforts to reuse, reduce, and recycle can be seen at home, work, and school. These practices, along with monitoring and planning, help build sustainable, more enjoyable communities.

Courtesy of Jeff Alper



Administrator Carol M. Browner talks with Delawarean Leah Roedel, about creating sustainable communities.